United Nations S/2002/1099

Security Council

Distr.: General
2 October 2002
English
Original: Arabic

Letter dated 30 September 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I should like to inform you that the units of the United States Navy that are on station in the Arabian Gulf against the wishes of the peoples of the region are continuing to engage in acts of piracy and provocation and to take hostile action against vessels carrying civilian merchandise in Iraqi territorial waters and elsewhere. Units of the Australian fleet have recently begun to join the intrusive patrols of the United States naval forces in their acts of aggression, and they intercept vessels and assault and question their crews. They also sometimes detain ships and their crews for long periods of time. I present to you hereunder some examples of these practices.

At 1100 hours on 16 September 2002 the Iraq Ports Authority tender Al-Fida' came under armed attack from naval craft from the Australian frigate as it was under way inside Iraqi territorial waters, five kilometres off Mina' al-Amayah al-Amiq, carrying a cargo of wheat from Umm Qasr to the Basrah silo. Armed men boarded the tender, restrained its crew and searched the entire vessel before leaving it at 1100 hours on 18 September.

The presence of the Australian fleet and its assistance to the United States Navy in its ongoing assaults on Iraqi vessels in the Arabian Gulf constitute acts of aggression that endanger the movement of civilian shipping in the Arabian Gulf. They are incompatible with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, international law and the international norms governing the safety of maritime navigation, and Australia and the United States of America must bear full legal responsibility for them.

Iraq affirms its right, in accordance with the principle of international responsibility, to seek compensation for the damage sustained by it or by its nationals as a result of the criminal acts being committed by these invading forces against ships in the Arabian Gulf region.

We urge you to intervene in order to prevent acts of aggression and terrorism by the United States and Australia that are in flagrant violation of the Charter of the

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United Nations, public international law and international humanitarian law, and we ask you to call upon the two countries concerned to withdraw their fleets from the Arabian Gulf.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Mohammed A. **Aldouri**
Permanent Representative